

INTRODUCTION  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

OF THE

**Beane Urban District**

For the Year 1926,

BY

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Medical Officer of Health.



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# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## BOURNE URBAN DISTRICT

FOR THE YEAR 1925.

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BOURNE, APRIL 6TH, 1926.

*To the Bourne Urban District Council.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In addition to the summary of the past year, this is intended to be a Survey Report, and as such, to show the measure of progress made in your area during the past five years, in the improvement of the Public Health, and the extent and character of changes made in the Public Health Services during that period.

In all but one department the progress has been trifling, but I can congratulate you on the whole-hearted manner in which the matter of Housing has been tackled.

### NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

#### (a) POPULATION.

The population of your District at the Census of 1921 was 4,317, it is now computed by the Registrar General to be 4,364, and on this figure the birth and death rates for the year have been calculated.

#### (b) PHYSICAL FEATURES AND GENERAL CHARACTER.

The District is, roughly speaking, a parallelogram, in extent about 5 miles from East to West and about  $2\frac{1}{2}$

miles North to South. Whilst practically level from North to South, from East to West it rises from 10 feet above sea level to 90 feet at the extreme Western boundary. With the exception of the Township proper the District, which embraces 9,775 acres, is sparsely populated, there are now 1,180 inhabited houses and 1,190 separate families or occupiers.

The rateable value is £28,822, and the sum represented by a penny rate is now £72.

(c) SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The population is entirely dependent upon agriculture or industries subservient to it, and since agriculture, during the war and subsequently has been flourishing, its social conditions, except for lack of housing accommodation, have been satisfactory. How it has been achieved, or how long it will last is not for me to discuss, but certain it is that the living of the worker has attained, most noticeably, what is called a much "higher standard."

(d) VITAL STATISTICS.

The Birth-rate for the year 1925 was 20 per 1,000 of the population, and compares with 18'3 per 1,000, the corresponding figure for England and Wales. Your five year average is 19'5, and the corresponding figure for England and Wales 19'9, so that your District, is for the five years, slightly under the general average.

The Death-rate for 1925 was 13'06, and is in excess of the rate for England and Wales which was 12'2, but the five year average leaves a rate of 11'9 against a similar average of 12'2 for England and Wales.

Of infants dying under one year of age the average per 1,000 born was 79'5 for the year 1925, and this is a higher figure than is usual in your District, and compares unfavourably with 75, the rate for England and Wales, but in such a small district the death of even one prematurely born infant makes a considerable difference

in the rate, and so the five year average is a far more reliable figure, the five year average for your District is 60·7, and compares with the five year average of 75·8 for England and Wales.

Of the total 57 deaths during the year, infectious disease was responsible for 17, viz.:—Measles 1, Whooping Cough 4, Influenza and Pneumonia 7, and Tuberculosis 5. The mortality from Cancer was 4. It may be noted that 22 of the deaths were of over 70 years, and 8 were over 80.

## **GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.**

### **HEALTH OFFICERS.**

The Staff consists of myself as part time Medical Officer of Health, and your whole time Sanitary Inspector, who is also Inspector under the Meat regulations, and in addition, is Surveyor also. There is also provided by the County Council a Health Visitor for Tuberculosis cases and for School Children. There is no nurse, maternity or general, but the Butterfield Cottage Hospital is able to send, on occasions, a trained nurse to urgent cases. I have repeatedly called attention to this lack of home nursing, maternity and general, but without success.

THE HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION in your District consists of :—

- (1) Subsidised by your Council.
  - (a) The Rural District Council's Infection Hospital.
  - (b) The Rural District Council's Small Pox Hospital.
- (2) Available to your inhabitants.
  - (a) Tuberculosis. The Rural District Council's Pavilion.
  - (b) Maternity. The maternity ward in the Union Infirmary.
  - (c) The Butterfield Cottage Hospital, with accommodation for eight patients.

There is a School Clinic in the North Street, under the arrangement of the County Council, where also is a Maternity and Child Welfare Centre which is well attended on alternate Thursday afternoons.

#### AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

At the close of the War the Red Cross Society presented an ambulance to the Town for general purposes. It was in frequent demand by the Rural District Council for removal of Infectious cases to their Isolation Hospital, and in consequence was housed at their charge. Subsequently the Rural District Council decided to acquire an ambulance for their exclusive use, and the Red Cross gift was sent back to Stamford. Why, I know not ! Summary of progress under this heading during the five past years:—Gained, a share in a Small-Pox Isolation Hut; lost, an ambulance ! !

#### SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

##### (a) WATER.

Practically all your inhabitants get their water supply under natural pressure from artesian bores, either those of the Bourne Waterworks Company or from private bores; the water is very pure although somewhat hard owing to the limestone through which it comes. This underground reservoir has not as yet recovered from the depletion caused by the drought in 1921, and in consequence the pressure has diminished. The Spalding Urban Council have also put down very large bores in your District, which still further reduces the pressure in the mains of the Bourne Company. As a result there have been in dry times many complaints of shortage of water, particularly in the West Street. Short of supplying artificial pressure, the Bourne Company have done what they could to remedy the complaints, without much

success, and have now made arrangements with the Spalding Council to receive from their bores water under pressure into the Company's system. This matter of water supply has, of course, had the attention of your Council for the last few years, and it has now been definitely decided to purchase the Bourne Waterworks Company's undertaking and to become your own water authority.

From a financial point of view, this decision would appear to be either too late or too early; too late, because had you been at an earlier date your own water authority, you might have obtained from the Spalding Authority some compensatory assistance for the benefits of which they are undoubtedly depriving you; too soon, because in taking over at the present time the Bourne Company's system at a valuation you saddle yourselves with whatever risk there may be of the efficiency of the Company's mains under extra pressure, just at a time when the Company were about to take that risk upon themselves.

I am told there is no ownership in water, but to the ordinary inhabitant of the District there is the sense of being wronged when a neighbouring District depletes his water supply without any sort of compensation; perhaps his instincts carry him back to the days when his ancestors paid water tribute to Stoke Rochford, all on account of that missing Stoke Rochford duck which was found swimming on Peter's pool at Bourne; evidently ownership in water has lapsed since then.

(b) POLLUTION OF WATERCOURSES.

I have to repeat that the Bourne Eau is polluted in the Eastgate by a firm of fellmongers who use the open stream for the purpose of their business, but this pollution does not appear to prejudicially affect any of your inhabitants.



(c) DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

Your sewers consist of a patchwork of barrel-arched culvert and sanitary pipes of varying size, and with a constantly varying fall. There have been frequent blockages to be dealt with, but no doubt the large quantity of waste water from disused or defective bores flushes the sewers and is thus useful in preventing trouble from decomposing sewerage at this stage, although by so largely increasing the volume of sewerage to be dealt with, this waste water becomes a serious nuisance later on.

All the houses which have been erected in recent years have water closets, the older ones, almost entirely cottages, have privvies, and a proportion of these have had the privvies replaced by w.c.'s. The difficulty in getting all of them so converted is not so much with water supply as with the connections with sewer through absence of fall.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The Sewage is carried for disposal to works just beyond the end of the Eastgate. These consist of settling tanks and coarse and fine filter beds, whence the effluent is discharged into the Weir Dyke, a catch-water drain which after a course of about 5 miles empties itself into the Forty-foot Drain at Guthram.

This installation is barely sufficient to deal satisfactorily with the average amount of sewage from a population such as yours. It is quite inadequate for a dry weather flow of 350,000 gallons per diem, and the smallest addition of surface water, such as a shower, sends your sewage absolutely untreated into the Weir Dyke. When you consider the fact that the Ministry of Health requires treatment to be provided for six times the dry weather flow, you will realize the urgency of serious effort to amend the present condition. Determined action in the matter of the waste bore water should reduce the dry weather flow by almost 50 per cent., and



at the same time, do something towards counteracting the drain on your water supply, which has been spoken of previously. There are facilities also for diverting from the sewers a considerable percentage of the storm water which not infrequently floods them, and on occasions brings evident sewage matter on to the street.

#### SCAVENGING.

Your Council has for several years arranged by contract for a house-to-house collection of refuse. This has greatly reduced the nuisances from overflowing and uncovered ashbins, etc., and has now gone a step further in insisting on proper covered receptacles for such refuse; would it not be well to go a step further still by providing a properly covered cart for its removal?

You have also now installed incinerators, and your Inspector says they are ample for dealing with the house refuse, but he complains that "all and everybody brings trade refuse, etc., most of it stuff that is unburnable in our destructors." I, myself, noticed a big heap of odds and ends such as battered tin trunks, petrol tins, old bicycle frames and such like.

#### SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

There are eight slaughter-houses in your District, and it must be born in mind that these cater not only for your own District, but also send a considerable quantity of dead meat to other markets; consequently there is entailed on your Inspector under the recent Meat Regulations, a very considerable amount of work in addition to his previous duties. He reports that the number of animals slaughtered per week average

Sheep	...	620
Pigs	...	13
Beast	...	9

and that this has necessitated 872 attendances.

The number of Bakehouses remains the same, there are none underground, some are structurally in poor condition, but with the exception of one or two slight infringements of the regulations to white-washing, etc., they have all been kept clean and in satisfactory condition. The total number of inspections was 92.

#### DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS.

In previous Reports I have stressed the fact that although milk is produced in your District in plenty, the structural conditions of the dairies and cowsheds left much room for improvement. I am glad to say that a commencement has now been made in making the larger milk sellers keep their premises in strict conformity with the requirements of the Ministry of Health. There still remains the problem of the many owners of one or two cows; in these cases the cows are usually stabled in an old hovel, and the dairy or storage accommodation is extremely primitive. These owners are not registered as milk sellers although, in fact, the majority sell milk to neighbours and market butter. I trust your Council will support your Surveyor in an effort to remedy this source of disease.

#### UNFIT FOOD.

Your Inspector reports the following as condemned and seized during the year :—

Fresh Meat.	Sheep, one carcase, one forequarter.		
	Beef, one forequarter.		
Tinned Food.	Meat	... 21	Tins
	Fish	... 49	„
	Milk	... 7	„
	Fruit	... 138	„

## INSPECTION OF NUISANCES.

Your Inspector reports that of general nuisances arising from defective drainage, accumulations of refuse, overflowing privvy vaults, etc., 85 were dealt with during the year, and all were abated after notice.

Two businesses classed under the heading of offensive trades were frequently observed and found satisfactory.

Eleven houses were disinfected during the year.

## PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

The tabulated list of Notifiable Diseases for the year 1925 may seem a lengthy one, but it is swollen by the inclusion of cases of Chicken Pox. This complaint is not usually notifiable, but as there occurred one or two cases of Small Pox in your neighbourhood, it was deemed safer to include the milder disease in the list of Notifiable Diseases.

Disease.	Total Cases Notified.	Admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Scarlet Fever	2	1	0
Diphtheria	3	3	0
Puerperal Fever	1	1	0
Erysipelas	1	0	0
Encephalitis Lethargica	1	1	0
Pneumonia	8	0	6
Chicken Pox	10	0	0

The death roll from Pneumonia is very heavy, it is to be accounted for in that 4 of the deaths were from the Pneumonia complicating influenza in elderly persons.

There were 4 fresh cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis during the year, and there were 5 deaths. One of the most gratifying features under this heading is the diminution in the frequency as also in the mortality of cases of Diphtheria,

due to the recognition of the public and public bodies of the enormous value of prompt diagnosis, isolation and treatment.

There were several epidemics of Non-Notifiable Infectious Disease; firstly, in the new year of 1925, an epidemic of Mumps so severe as to cause the closing of the Council's School at Twenty; following on that, an epidemic of Whooping Cough, also severe and responsible for the death of four young children. This was a disaster, but not by any means unparalleled, for in 1920, the epidemic of Measles and Whooping Cough resulted in the death of 8 children. Here is an extract from my report for that year. "Possibly because these are not notifiable complaints, parents consider that measures of isolation are unnecessary; parents perhaps do not realise how extremely serious these diseases are in the case of very young children; it should be their duty during an epidemic to watch their family most closely for any sign of departure from health, such as symptoms of cough or cold and to separate the patient as far as possible from the rest; in particular to keep the baby, if there is one, well away from the suspected case, for it is the baby of about twelve months old who dies, and who has always caught the complaint from another member of the household." To this I will add that in my opinion a case of Whooping Cough, and a baby of under eighteen months old ought not to be permitted to occupy the same house.

I have mentioned previously an epidemic of Chicken Pox which was rather wide-spread but otherwise of no importance.

## TUBERCULOSIS

During the year 1925 there were 5 fresh cases notified, and there were six deaths.

Nine of your inhabitants were under treatment in Sanatoria.

# PARTICULARS.

## New cases and mortality during 1925.

Age Periods.	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0 ... ..								
1 ... ..								
5 ... ..								
10 ... ..								
15 ... ..								
20 ... ..	1	1		1	1			1
25 ... ..						1		
35 ... ..								
45 ... ..	1	1			2	1		
55 ... ..								
65 and upwards								
Totals ... ..	2	2		1	3	2		1

## HOUSING.

### (a) GENERAL CONDITIONS.

It is very gratifying to be able to record the great alteration that has taken place since my report of 1920, particularly in the last two years.

To meet the deficiency, I had previously recommended forty houses as the minimum needed to relieve the congestion and to allow of the closing of those tenements which, although unfit for habitation, were still occupied.

These houses have now all been built and are all inhabited. Private enterprise has also been much more active in that thirty-three houses, mostly with the aid of the Subsidy, have been erected also ; but this cannot be expected to continue, nor is it, I think, desirable that this bonus on house building should continue unmodified.

Shrewd speculators, knowing the urgency of the demand for houses, have built for immediate sale and have been able to demand such a price as to make that Subsidy a very handsome profit. It might help matters if :—

- (1) The Subsidy were not payable until the house is occupied ;
- (2) The Subsidy were paid in instalments to the owner over a short term of years, say five.

As to your future programme:—

It is evident now that my estimate of 40 houses fell very short of what was actually required, since although those have materialized you have still been unable to close any of the very insanitary dwellings which I have so often reported on, and which the County Medical Officer made special report upon to his Council during the year. Further, you are aware that the list of applicants for the last batch of eight houses was as long as for the first; but the character of the applicant has changed, and it is now not so much the homeless one; it is the one who wants to leave the unsuitable home he now has to live in. Unfortunately also many of these applicants are quite unable to afford the rent charged for your present type of house, unable to furnish it, unable to maintain it and indeed in some cases utterly unfit to inhabit it. The most cursory tour of inspection will convince you that something different from the commodious parlour type cottage is needed.

It should therefore be your aim:—

Firstly, to provide dwellings more modest in rental, more in keeping with the weekly income of the poorest class of your workers; secondly, to insist that for every one of such dwellings erected, one of the existing hovels shall be demolished.



## HOUSING STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1925.

Number of new houses erected during the year:—

(a)	Total (including numbers given separately under (b) )	...	...	...	33
(b)	With State assistance under the Housing Act:				
	(i) By the Local Authority	...	...	...	16
	(ii) By other bodies or persons	...	...	...	17

### 1. UNFIT DWELLING-HOUSES.

Inspection—(1)	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	...	...	110
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910, or the Housing Consolidation Regulations, 1925				63
(3)	Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	19
(4)	Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	...	34

### 2. REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICES.

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	...	...	...	26
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### 3. ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS.

#### A.—*Proceedings under section 3 of the Housing Act, 1925.*

(1)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	12
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:—	
	(a) By owners ... ..	33
	(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	nil
(3)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close ... ..	7

#### B.—*Proceedings under Public Health Acts.*

(1)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... ..	17
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:—	
	(a) By owners ... ..	17
	(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	Nil

#### C.—*Proceedings under sections 11, 14, and 15 of the Housing Act, 1925.*

(1)	Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders ...	9
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made ... ..	9
(3)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit ...	Nil
(4)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ...	Nil
(5)	Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ...	Nil

## WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES.

The Workshops and Bakeries on the register for the year numbered 27.

There have been 92 inspections during the year, the defects being as follows :—

Want of Cleanliness    ...            ...    2

These defects were remedied without reference to H.M. Inspector, and no prosecutions were necessary.

I remain,

Obediently yours,

W. J. GILPIN.







